

Copa

The Hostess of the Inn

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Copa

The Hostess of the Inn

*Publius Vergilius Maro
Aeneid Vergiliana*

Copa: The Hostess of the Inn

A Neglected Classic

Its Reputed Authors, Cynthia and
Propertius, and the Story
of Keppler's Search

Edited by
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INTRODUCTION

The following account of Dr. Keppler's deep and long-continued interest in the neglected classic, "Copa", and of his researches into the merits and authorship of that poem, would make, by itself, an interesting story.

To this story we have added the poem, in the original and in translation; a study of Propertius who had something to do with the poem; and some notes concerning Cynthia, the "golden girl", who is named as its author by Dr. Keppler.

Propertius was a poet of distinction, a forerunner of the type of D'Annunzio; he was one of the circle of Maecenas, and a master of elegiac verse.

His friend Cynthia, perhaps the *illustris puella* of the learned critic Broekhuizen, was a person to whom, in the words of Martial, "Propertius gave fame and received no less from her". She had remarkable talents, even if she were not, as Keppler thought, the lost Sappho of an Augustan inn.

*Fovetur itaque magno suo merito poetica civitate
illustris puella cujus nomen inter Romanae lyrae
cultrices adhuc desiderari piaculum fuerit.*

J. Broukhusius

Therefore by her own merit there flourishes in the poetic commonwealth a noble woman whose name it would be a wrong to have lacking among the cultivators of the Roman lyre.

Copa: The Hostess of the Inn

I

There lived and flourished in Venice during the past thirty years a well known German practitioner, Dr. Fritz Keppler. He was a skillful surgeon, a well-informed and resourceful physician, and he kept up his active work and extensive practice till the last year of his life. He was then attacked by a malignant disease which caused his death in the Spring of 1908, at the age of sixty-six.

Keppler in his early life was interested in literary, political and economic subjects. He was associated for a time with La Salle; he wrote political articles, fought many duels, and composed and published a small book of verses.

But he laid aside politics and economics when he came to Venice and entered enthusiastically into the work of his profession. He acquired a large practice and established a clinic; he also incidentally collected a large and valuable library of medical and general literature. One of his particular diversions, outside of his practical work however, was the Latin classics, in which his library was very rich.

Among pieces attributed to some poet of the Augustan period is a short poem called "Copa", which means "The Hostess of the Inn".

This early attracted Keppler's interest, for he thought it one of the most beautiful poems of the classic period.

The author of the poem had never been definitely known, and for many years Dr. Keppler says that he read his Latin daily, trying to find some verse which had the characteristics of the little piece, which he called his "foundling". His labor was rewarded, at least in a degree and to his own satisfaction, for he finally reached the conclusion that the mysterious author was a certain lady named "Hostia", to whom the poet Propertius addressed his Elegies and to whom that author says "Apollo had given all the gifts of song".

Cum tibi præsertim Phœbus sua carmina donet.

El. I 2

Hostia was a well-known character in Rome. She was probably the grand-daughter of a Latin poet named Hostius. She had beauty, wit and talent for music, poetry and dancing. Propertius addresses his elegies to her under the name of Cynthia, elegies which indicate that he was of the type of Alfred de Musset and that Hostia, the gifted inspirer of his work, while not perhaps his Roman George

Sand was at least able to write songs "equal to those of Corinna and of Erinna".

Et quantum Æolio cum temptat carmina plectro,
Par Aganippeæ ludere docta lyræ,
Et sua cum antiquæ committit scripta Corinnæ
Carminaque Erinnes non putat æqua suis.

El. II 3, 19

As to the literary value of the poem and the date of its appearance there seem to be substantial agreement. It is well known to Latin students, for it used to be attributed to Virgil and is included in his collected works in the older editions.

In Dunlop's *History of Roman Literature*, 1828, it is translated in part. Dunlop says that "it is a good-humored drinking song by the majestic author of the *Georgics* and *Aeneid*." He adds, "A few of the lines, although some barbarisms occur, are written with considerable spirit."

Dunlop's translation is so bad that it brings tears to the eyes, and I can but think his critical estimate of *Copa* of little value. German critics are more kindly. Hertzberg says, "This much is certain, the author of *Copa* belonged to the best period of Roman poetry; yet further, he must have held a prominent place among the poets of his time; this poem could not have been his only work."

Teuffel and Schwabe* say that *Copa* is an "Elegy

* *History of Roman Literature*.

of the best time" written in the manner of Virgil, but unlike him in its sprightly tone.

Broekhuizen thinks that the author of the poem ought to occupy a high place among the cultivators of the Roman lyre. Crutwell says that the poem would be perfect if the first quatrain were omitted; and he adds, "if it is not Virgil's we have lost in its author a genre poet of the highest power."

It may be seen that Keppler's appreciation of the poem does not lack support.

As to the authorship: the opinion at one time held that it was an early poem of Virgil's seems to have been generally abandoned.

A learned German critic, Herzberg, thought it might be by Propertius, or by some one who knew his Propertius well; for there are phrases and even a whole line in *Copa* which are found in the *Elegies* of that author. The Latin scholar, Broekhuizen, thought it was written by a Roman lady of the time of Augustus who was illustrious in poetic art.

Copa has also been attributed to the poet Florus of the time of Hadrian (Zell), to a Septimus Severus of the time of Flavian (Wernsdorf), and to Caius Valgius Rufus (Ilgen), a friend of Horace.

On the whole, Keppler says, the only well known authors who have really much claim on *Copa* are Virgil and Propertius; then he proceeds to show why it could be neither of these. The argument is long

and technical and would not especially interest the reader. It is not difficult to disprove what is not at all well established and so we are convinced that Dr. Keppler makes out a case.

Keppler's argument that Hostia was the author is, briefly, this: the poem was published about the time of Propertius, it was written probably by a woman (Broekhuizen) and by one who knew that author well and incorporated in it some of his phrases and expressions. But these forms of expression were not in the true manner of that author, who was learned, formal and complex, while Copa is simple, unconventional and natural. Hence it seems more likely that Propertius got his unusual turns of expression from Copa than the reverse. Now Propertius lived in intimate relations with Hostia for five years. She was a poet of distinction and a woman of unusual talents; and she led the kind of life which would make the sentiments of Copa fit well to her poetic invention. Hence the probability that Hostia was the authoress.

This exposition makes a monograph of sixty-five pages and we are giving only an outline of his reasoning. It gives the impression of being an interesting guess. The most striking point is that Propertius has used here and there in his Elegies the style of Copa, which is not like his usual style and which may easily have crept in from association

with a natural poet, not one of the Schools or of the Sodaliceum, the Poet's Club of that period.

The view that *Copa* was written by some illustrious woman had been suggested by Broekhuizen two centuries ago and Keppler, thinking that he had realized Broekhuizen's theory, dedicated his book to this critic's memory and introduced his argument with the quotation which we have placed at the beginning of this work.

In Keppler's last months of illness he gave his time to writing out the evidence we have gathered here and just before his death finished his monograph, in which he gives also his interpretation of the poem as a piece of literature. It does not require great gifts to recognize deserved merit in *Copa*. It is pleasingly descriptive, natural and unpretentious and its climax is very effective. As a whole it is a very interesting, human and convincing piece and it differs so wholesomely in its simplicity from the ordinary lyrics, elegies and satires of the "best Roman times" that we wish the authoress had left more work to posterity.

And it is not only the merit of the poem and the question of authorship, but also the intense interest taken in it by Dr. Fritz Keppler that appeal to one and give to the matter a modern and human interest.

The spectacle of this brave and learned gentleman,

mortally ill, engaging his last days in putting before the public his favorite gem of the Augustan classics and trying to add a new name to the dwellers on Parnassus, deserves a record.

Whether Hostia, or Cynthia, is a new-found Sappho of an Augustan inn is of less moment.



Dr. Fritz Keppler

ARGUMENT

The poem represents the opening and exploitation of an inn and summer garden, perhaps in the suburbs of Rome. The "Copa" or hostess, Surisca, appears before her guests dancing, and describes the beauties and attractions of the place. The narration, says Keppler, is like a kind of business announcement of a new suburban resort, such as we now see in our daily papers, done in verse.

"But out of this material," Keppler adds, "the poetess by the most simple and natural means has built up an art-work of the first rank. In beautiful flowing verses the poetess enumerates, one after the other, the various delights the place affords."

"From verse to verse she increases the expectations of the guests, and warms their fancy, and then concludes quickly and dramatically with the boldest imagery which any poet of the classic period has ventured to present."

The Copa, written in elegiac * verse, is usually

*The elegiac verse is made up of one line of hexameter, or six feet; and one of pentameter, or five feet. The verse therefore was written in couplets, and it was especially used in epigram, inscription and elegy. The two forms of meter, hexameter and pentameter, were those most often employed and most fully developed by the makers of Latin poetry.

printed without sub-divisions, but it falls naturally into quatrains and we have presented it in that way.

The incident of the guardian of the chapel, with his scythe and "huge hips" and tired ass, has a local and a mythological significance which is obscure even to the pundits of today.

The Song of Surisca
The Hostess of a Country Inn

The Hostess, Surisca, binds her head
with the fillet, and gracefully moving
her slender body to the castinets,
touched with the wine, goes thro'
the wanton dance in her famous Inn,
striking her elbow on the
clattering pipes.

"What profits it, if one be wearied
with the summer's heat, to keep
away from the ever-thirsty turf!
Here are flowery walks and little huts,
and cups and roses; the flute and zither.
Here are summer-houses cooled
by shady branches;

"And listen now to the pipe of the
shepherd sounding his rural notes
which sweetly clatter in the grove
of Menelaus,

Here is new wine flowing from the
pitch-stained cask ; and a brook
runs by with a gurgling noise.

" Here are wreaths of violets twined with
the crocus, and festoons of fiery
yellow mixed with the rose ;
And lilies, washed in virgin
fountains, which the Nymphs
have brought in their wicker baskets.

" Here are the little cakes, dried,
in the rushes ;
And plums yellowed in the
autumnal day.
Here are chestnuts and shining
apples and all the ornaments
of Ceres and Venus and Bacchus ;

" Blood-red mulberries and grapes
on the slender vines ; and the blue-
green cucumber hangs from its stem.
Here is the guardian of the chapel,
armed with his willow hook,
not so terrible as he seems with
his vast figure.

" Come hither little brother : See how
the tired ass sweats ; Spare him ;
for he delights us.

Now the locusts break forth
again and again over
wooded fields;
And the lizard lies hidden
in his cold retreat.

"Now if you are thirsty, rest and pour
out the cooling drink in a glass,
Or, if you wish, bring new cups
of crystal;
Come here and rest your weary
limbs beneath the leafy shade;
and bind your heavy head with
garlands of flowers,

"snatching beautiful kisses from
the mouth of the slender girl—
Let him perish who is too proud!
What! will you throw the perfumed
wreaths to the ungrateful ashes?
Do you long to lie beneath that
stone with which your flowers are crowned?

"Bring forth the wine and dice,
Let him perish who cares for
the morrow!
Death, pulling your ear, says;
'Live, I come.'"

Copa

Keppler's Text

COPA Surisca, caput graeca redimita mitella,
Crispum sub crotalo docta movere latus,
Ebria famosa saltat lasciva taberna,
Et cubitum raucos excutiens calamos:

" Quid juvat aestivo defessum pulvere abesse
Quam potius bibulo decubuisse toro?
Sunt topia et kalybae, cyathi, rosa, tibia, chordae,
Et triclia umbrosis frigida harundinibus.

En et, Maenalia quae garrit dulce sub antro,
Rustica pastoris fistula more sonat.
Est et vappa, cado nuper defusa picato,
Est strepitans rauco murmure rivus aquae;

Sunt et cum croceo violae de flore corollae
Sertaque purpurea lutea mixta rosa
Et quae virgineo libata Achelois ab amne
Lilia vimineis attulit in calathis.

Sunt et cascoli, quos juncea fiscina siccant,
Sunt autumnali cerea pruna die
Castanaeaeque nucesque et suave rubentia mala,
Est hic munda Ceres, est Amor, est Bromius;

Sunt et mora cruenta, et lentis uva racemis
Et pendet junco caeruleus cucumis.
Est tuguri custos, armatus falce saligna,
Sed non et vasto est inguine terribilis.

Huic calybita veni. Lassus jam sudat asellus,
'Parce illi : nostrum delictum est asinus'.
Nunc cantu crebro rumpunt arbusta cicadae,
Nunc vere in gelida sede lacerta latet :

Si sapis, aestivam recubans nunc prolue vitro,
Seu vis crystalli ferre novos calices ;
Hic age pampinea fessus requiesce sub umbra
Et gravidum roscos necte caput strophio,

Formosum tenerae decerpens ora puellae —
A pereat cui sunt prisca supercilia !
Quid cineri ingrato servas bene olentia sarta ?
An ne coronato vis lapide ista tegi ?

Pone merum et talos. Pereat qui crastina curat :
Mors aurem vellens 'vivite', ait, 'venio'."

Cynthia

We do not know the train of reasoning which led the learned Broekhuizen to attribute Copa to an *illustris puella*. Perhaps because it is a song by a woman, and is informal and unlearned. Perhaps because it sings of an Inn, and Broekhuizen may have doubted if any male poet of the circle of Maecenas would sing of an Inn. Perhaps because a man of that day would not sing about flowers or know so much about them. Admitting the poem to be by a woman, there was in Augustan times only one other poetess besides Cynthia who could have written it, —a noble lady named Sulpicia, who wrote certain very charming love letters. But such of her work as we have is not in the style of Copa. So we are turned, as Keppler tells us we should be, to Cynthia, —and she deserves further notice.

We have already spoken of her origin and position in life. It is known that she was a person of beauty and talent, but of a somewhat inconstant disposition.

She had also a fiery temper, from which Propertius suffered, but which nevertheless he loved. He says:

Dulcis ad hesternas fuerat mihi rixa lucernas,
etc.

El. IV 7

I was delighted with our quarrel last evening and with all the reproaches of your frantic tongue.

He adds:

Nam sine amore gravi femina nulla dolet.

El. IV 7

Unless she is violently in love, no woman feels offended.

And further:

Hostibus eveniat lenta puella meis.

El. IV 7

May my enemies meet with an easy-tempered mistress.

Propertius calls her often *docta puella* and credits her with being the inspirer of his verse; of giving, in fact, as much as she received, for she led him to use and develop his talents.

Cynthia was a blonde, either by nature or art. She calls herself his "golden girl".

Hic Tiburtina jacet aurea Cynthia.

El. V 7

Here in the soil of Tiber lies the Golden Cynthia.

She was tall, and of graceful figure, for which, he says "she needed no medicine". She had long hands, and wonderful eyes.

*Fulva coma est longaeque manus et maxima toto
Corpore, et incidit vel Jove digna soror.*

El. II 2

Her hair is yellow and her hands are long; she is tall and walks forth like a sister of Jove.

She was charming in conversation, able to sing, dance, play the lyre and write poems equal to those of the Greek poetess Corinna. She had in fact all the gifts of which Venus and Minerva approve. And it was to her credit that Propertius won her not by his wealth, but by the merit of his songs.

*Hanc ego non auro, non Indis flectere conchis,
Sed potui blandi carminis obsequio.*

El. I 8

Her not my gold could bend nor Indian Shells
But winning homage in loves villanelles.

She was fond of finery, and it is to be feared made herself up when she went out to walk. Propertius protests against these habits:

To Cynthia

Why walk, my love, with burnished hair,
And flutt'ring folds of silken vest?
No tress from Syrian myrrh is fair;
All stranger arts thou should'st detest.

Spoil not with boughten gauds thy grace,
Nor mar thy form's own loveliness;
Of pinching drugs be there no trace,
The uncloth'd Cupid to distress.

Earth's gorgeous hues in freedom bloom;
The ivy's guide, its errant will;
The arbutus, far from fashion's doom,
'Mong wild rocks springs more fairly still.

The flower'd brooks from pathways turn,
The unstain'd pebbles deck the strand:
From naught but Nature do they learn,
As songbirds fly the trainer's hand.

In simple ways did Phoebe lead
The am'rous Castor to her feet;
Hilaria's charms made Pollux plead
His love with burning zeal, yet sweet.

Her virgin looks—no paint, no gem—
Apollo drew in fiercest chase,
In hope Marpesa's flight to stem,
And thrust himself in Idas' place.

The Pisan's milk white skin inflam'd
Apelles' hopeless brush to limn,
And fired the Phrygian, unasham'd,
To force her will and mate with him.

All these unaided won their swains;
Their modest beauty made men slaves.
Shall Cynthia be less worth the pains
Of winning all a lover craves?

The conquest of one longing heart
Adorns a maid with royal mien;
So coyness be your better part,
As best becomes love's dainty queen;

With Phoebus' added gift of song,
Deft fingers ling'ring on the lyre,
The merry wit that plays among
The words that mask your fond desire.

Endow'd thus, in splendor dight,
Nor Venus' form, Minerva's mind,
Can ampler make the sheer delight
That flows from thee, forever kind.

So Cynthia, dear, contented stay
With thine own grace to hold my praise;
Let flippant girls do what they may,
Ruthless to blot their fairest days:
No artifice our love betrays.

T. F. C. El. I 2

Cynthia was jealous and inconstant, and flirted with a rich praetor while making love to the poor,—and also inconstant—Propertius. She died rather early,

and Propertius, who laments her in an Elegy, did not survive her many years or write very good verse after her decease.

Cynthia was not the hostess of an inn, but a woman of good family. Yet she knew of such suburban resorts as are described in Copa and she could, if she wished, dance and play and sing "striking her elbow on the clattering pipes".

She could also inspire a love that was intense and true. Were this not so, how could her lover have written the following lines, which a critic, Postgate, has called especially sublime.

Ut caput in magnis ubi non est tangere signis
Ponitur hic imos ante corona pedes,
Sic nos nunc, inopes laudis condescendere
culmen,
Pauperibus sacris vilia tura damus.
Nondum etenim Ascraeos norunt mea carmina
fontes

El. III 1

As when, of lofty statues men can not touch
the head, they lay the garland here low at
the feet ;
So I, all powerless to climb in song thy glory's
height, present cheap incense in humble
offering ;
For not yet have my strains reached the springs
of Helicon.



Propertius

Propertius

Dr. Keppler, in his *Copa* says that Propertius is the only one of the recognized classic authors of Rome who could have written that poem, had he wished to do so; and he adds that, though "Propertius did not write it", he must, in a very distinct way, have helped its author.

There occur in Propertius two lines almost exactly like lines in *Copa*.

Hic dulces cerasos, hic autumnalia pruna
Cernis et aestivo mora rubere die.

El. V 2

Here you see sweet cherries, and autumnal plums and blood-red mulberries in a summer's day.

The occasion justifies us in calling attention to the merits of Propertius, because he rightly deserves it in this connection, and also because we are writing under the sub-title of "a neglected classic";—and Propertius is one of the most neglected of the writers of classic Latin.

Sextus Propertius lived in Rome, B. C. 50-16. He began the study of law, but gave it up for literature. He had a moderate fortune and passed a rather idle and uneventful life, mingling in the exclusive literary circle of his time. He was a friend of Virgil and of Ovid ; but was not liked by Horace. He was well spoken of by his contemporaries and gained so high a position in the poetic ranks that he was confident of his own immortality. But his poetry disappeared from literature for fourteen hundred years. He was not known to the learned of mediaeval times. In the middle of the fifteenth century a manuscript copy of his writings was found beneath a cask in the cellar of a wine-shop in Naples. (J. Pontanus, quoted by Broeckhuizen.) His work soon attracted the attention of critics and it became one of the acknowledged classics of the Augustan period. In late years Propertius has gained steadily in esteem and appreciation. Few higher encomiums of a poet have been given than those of this author by Sellar, Duff, Postgate, Mackail and Crutwell.¹

¹ Propertius has within the present generation emerged from comparative neglect to the place of chief favorite among the elegiac poets. — Sellar, *Roman Poets*.

For poetic gifts of the highest order none of the elegists could rival him. — Duff, *Literary History of Rome*.

In striking contrast to Virgil, Propertius is a genius of great and indeed phenomenal precocity. — Mackail, *Latin Literature*.

He was by far the greatest master of pentameter that Rome ever produced. — Crutwell, *History of Roman Literature*.

Propertius is not more difficult in Latin than other Augustan poets. His themes, however, were chiefly love or lament, and few of his poems have for the modern reader a continuous charm. But he mastered the elegiac verse and wrote it with a "richness of coloring and sumptuousness of rhythm" surpassing any that had been done in Rome. His first book, *Cynthia Monobiblos*, created a sensation, and gave him a place at once in the circle of Maecenas.

Propertius possessed in a high degree what his contemporaries called *blanditia*, meaning thereby a certain charm, a gift of intensive and melodious expression which touches the feelings and stirs the imagination. Modern critics agree in finding in his poetry this quality and are fond of quoting certain couplets and stanzas which have a remarkable beauty due in part to this peculiar charm as well as to his eloquence, *facundia*, and his mastery of versification. Illustrations taken from their context are apt to seem cold; but we cite a few lines from Postgate and Duff, some of whose translations we have used.

[The lover is waiting the call of his mistress.]

Me mediae noctes, me sidera prona jacentem,
Frigidaque Eoo me dolet aura gelu.

El. I 16

The midnights, the setting stars, and the chill

breeze of the cold dawn all pity me as I lie waiting thee.

[He gives a warning to Cynthia.]

Sunt apud infernos tot milia formosarum.

El. II 28

There be in hell a thousand ladies fair.

[Age does not change his love.]

Putris et in vacua requiescit navis harena

Et vetus in templo bellica parma vacat

At me ab amore diducet nulla senectus.

El. III 20

The rotten ship rests on the desert shore, and the battered warshield hangs at ease on the temple; but from thy love no age shall part me.

[The dead Cynthia visiting Propertius in a dream reproaches him for not having attended her funeral.]

Denique quis curvum nostro te funere vidit?

Atram quis lacrimis incaluisse togam?

El. V 7

Who saw you bowed with grief at my funeral,
Making thy black toga hot with tears?

[Cornelia, a Roman matron, returns as a ghost to her husband. She explains the quality of her ghostness :]

En sum, quod digitis quinque levatur, onus!

El. V 11

I am but a weight that may be lifted by five fingers!

Propertius had a precocious genius and we are told that at the age of twenty he had done work comparable to that of Keats' and Shelley's youth. If he had not been precocious, however, he would have done little, for he was a man of delicate constitution, and he seemed to have long had an apprehension of his early death. This is shown by frequent references to the subject.

Una ratis fati nostros portabit amores
Caerula ad infernos velificata lacus.

El. II 28

Our loves must fare in one Doom's caravel,
Dark blue, with sails set for the meres of hell.

Dum nos fata sinunt, oculos satiemus amore
Nox tibi longa venit nec reditura dies.

El. II 15

Feast we our eyes on love while fate saith yea,
The long night comes with daybreak gone for aye;
Thou must not, while 'tis light, life's fruit eschew,
Give all thy kisses, they will still be few.

Copa ends with a reference to death and in this respect is distinctly Propertian.

Goethe read the Elegies of Propertius and was stirred to write something of the same kind. Perhaps Milton had read the Elegy on Paetus before he

wrote Lycidas, for the theme is the same in each. Propertius laments the death of a young friend who was lost at sea; and this is Milton's theme also. Propertius invokes the Nymphs and asks why they did not save his friend; and Milton does the same. Propertius protests against the quest of riches; Milton sings of the vanity of ambition. Both poems are rich in mythology. Both dwell upon the loss of the body of their friend and its entombment in the seas.

Milton refers to the bones of Lycidas :

Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding
seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled.

And Propertius :

Sed tua nunc volucres astant super ossa marinae,
Nunc tibi pro tumulo Carpathium omne marest."

Now the sea birds perch above thy bones;
Thou hast the whole Carpathian sea for a tomb.

Milton refers to the unseaworthy ship which caused the loss of Lycidas :

It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the Eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Propertius, too, curses the ships which were his friend's undoing :

Rates curvas et leti . . . causas :

Milton invokes the Nymphs and asks why they did not save Lycidas :

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless
deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

And Propertius :

O centum aequoreae Nereo genitori puellae, etc.

O hundred daughters of father Nereus,
And you Thetis who hast suffered a mother's
grief,
You should have placed your arms beneath his
tired chin.

Milton asks that Lycidas' body be cared for :

Look homeward Angel now, and melt with ruth,
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

And Propertius :

Redditi corpus humo . . .

Paetum sponte tua, vilis arena, tegas.

Restore, ye waves, his body to the earth,
And cover Paetus, ye shifting sands, of your own
will.

The poem by Propertius is more direct and human than a pastoral like that of Milton's could possibly be, and the note of pathos in it is more convincing.

Elegy IV. 6

On the Death of Paetus Who was Drowned
at Sea

Thou art, O Money! the cause of anxious lives;
thro' thee we tread the path of death before our time.

Thou feedest with cruel food the weaknesses of
man;¹
and the seeds of Care spring from thy head. Thou
hast
led Paetus to stretch his sails towards Pharos. Thou
hast wrecked him, thrice and four times, in the
frenzied waters.

While following thee, he, unhappy one,
dies in his prime and tosses on the waves,
a fresh banquet for the fish of distant seas;
his mother can not place him with due rites
in the kindly earth, nor bury him among his kin.

The sea birds, Paetus, now perch above thy bones;
thou hast for a tomb the whole Carpathian sea.²

Why tell how few thy years, my Paetus! or how,
when tossing on the waves the name
of thy dear mother was upon thy lips!

¹ Tuo vitiis hominum crudelia pabula praebeas.

² Nunc tibi pro tumulo Carpathium omne mare est.

The billows have no gods;¹ for all the ropes
which held thee to the rocks gave way before the
storms of night.

.

Go, build curved ships, causes of many deaths,—
of deaths prepared by human hands. The earth
was far too little for the Fates;² and to it
we have added the great sea and by our art
have made broader the unhappy ways of Fortune.

.

Never do the ships grow old ; and even the harbor
breaks its faith.³

.

If Paetus had but been content to plough his
father's fields; if he had given weight to friendly
words,
he would be living now, a pleasant guest
before his own Penates, poor, but safe
on land where winds blow little harm. Here Paetus
had not to hear the thunder of the storm,
nor tear his tender hands with cruel ropes ;
but he could lie within his chamber of cedar
or Orician ash, his head resting
on the many-colored pillows.

¹ Non unda habet deos.

² Terra parum fuerat fatis,
adjecimus undas

³ haud ulla carina
Consenuit, fallit portus et ipse fidem.

While he fought for life, the waves tore off
his nails and he swallowed the hateful water.
The merciless night saw him clinging to the
little plank :—
So many evils united that Paetus might die.

Yet, in this sad extremity, weeping he spoke
these words :
" Ye Gods ! who rule the waters of the Aegean sea,
Ye Winds ! and whatever wave is pressing down my
head,
whither do you take the tender years
of my unhappy youth ?

I have brought to your straits only innocent hands.
The god of the blue sea has set his trident
against me,
and I, wretched, shall be dashed upon the sharp
rocks of Alcyon :
But I pray the tempest may blow me upon the coast
of Italy ; it will be enough, if I may but get
to my mother's care." ¹

The wave caught him, speaking thus, and drew him
down in its writhing vortex.
These were the last words and this the last
day of Paetus.

¹ Hoc de me satis erit si modo matris est.

O, ye hundred Daughters of father Nereus,
and thou, Thetis, who hast also known
a mother's grief,
you should have placed your arms beneath his tired
chin;
he could not have weighed down your hands.

Restore, ye waves, his body to the earth,—
his life is flown. And cover him of your own
accord, O shifting sands!
And when the sailor passes his tomb,
let him say: "Thou canst be a warning
even to the bold".

But, thou, cruel north wind, shalt never see my
sails. I will be buried after a peaceful life
before the door of my home.

Whether Cynthia or Propertius wrote Copa, or both or neither, we pay our tribute to Keppler for awakening interest in a neglected classic and for drawing attention also to the literary work of an Augustan writer most likely to have been concerned in its production. For Propertius not only copied the Greek poetic measure, but also tamed and broke for his special and high artistic use a very wonderful language previously used for war and business only. The result was fruitful and interesting; for though

Latin poetry does not represent the muse in her highest flights, it is unique among literatures in forcefulness, and, to moderns, in the curious charm and cryptic beauty of its dislocated constructions.



The Hostess of an Inn (Copa)

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